

<b>Housing Services Policy</b>	 <b>Hamilton</b>	Content Updated: 2014-11-11
<b>Social Housing Administration</b>		<b>Housing Services Division</b>
<b>Eviction Prevention</b>		Co-ordinated Access Guide
Page 1 of 3		Approval: 2014-11-11
<b>Eviction Prevention Policy</b>		
<b>POLICY STATEMENT</b>	The City of Hamilton as Service Manager under the <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i> (HSA), has established eviction prevention best practices.	
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<p>To identify eviction prevention best practices for non-profit Housing Providers who adhere to the <i>Housing Services Act, 2011</i> (HSA), and for all Housing Providers and Rent Supplement Landlords to use these best practices to help tenants maintain their housing.</p> <p>Eviction is a last resort. Tenants living in non-profit housing or rent supplement units are generally low-income households who, if evicted, would find it difficult to obtain housing either in alternate affordable housing or the private market. Therefore, all non-profit Housing Providers and Rent Supplement Landlords are encouraged to adopt the activities identified in the <i>Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit</i> to avoid evictions due to economic reasons.</p> <p>The Eviction Prevention Policy describes the information and key elements necessary for non-profit Housing Providers to engage in eviction prevention activities. This policy aligns with the City of Hamilton's 2013 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan; specifically, Strategy 3.7: "Encourage the development and implementation of enhanced eviction prevention policies in the social housing system."</p>	
<b>SCOPE</b>	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-profit Housing Providers;</li> <li>• Rent Supplement Landlords;</li> <li>• All tenants living with any non-profit Housing Provider; when it comes to eviction prevention activities, there is no need to distinguish between tenants who are in receipt of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance and tenants who pay market rent;</li> <li>• Social Housing Administration team members, particularly: Senior Policy Analyst, Housing Administration Officers and the Manager of Social Housing;</li> </ul> <p>The selection of best practices in the <i>Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit</i> is intended to represent the activities that are most commonly used to prevent rental arrears and economic evictions.</p>	
<b>DEFINITIONS</b> <b>Best Practices</b>	a set of operational practices generally accepted by an industry as leading to increased operational efficiency, and thus worthy of being shared and copied among like service providers	
<b>Eviction Prevention</b>	a range of strategies that help tenants remain housed	



**TERMS & CONDITIONS**

The City of Hamilton provided hard copies of the *Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit* to all non-profit housing providers and rent supplement landlords under its jurisdiction. The *Toolkit* is available electronically on the City of Hamilton’s website.

The *Toolkit* gives information and key elements required for effective eviction prevention. Eviction Prevention is a range of strategies that help tenants remain housed. There are 36 Communication, Rent Repayment, Education and Training strategies in the *Toolkit*. Key strategies include:

- Develop and implement an Eviction Prevention Policy;
- Train new staff and have annual refresher training for existing staff;
- Host information sessions for tenants;
- Tell tenants about eviction prevention at lease signing, annual reviews and when tenants are having trouble paying their rent;
- Make rent repayment agreements that are fair and realistic.
- Establish a standard of three attempts to contact a tenant before giving the N4 – Notice to End a Tenancy Early for Non-Payment of Rent; a Notice should be preceded and followed up with personal, direct contact whenever possible; Direct contact may include a letter, phone call, visit or any other contact that gives tenants the chance to respond to the situation and discuss solutions.

The *Toolkit* also has five tools to be used along with the strategies:

1. Do you know there are things you can do to avoid eviction?
2. Top 5 Things You Need to Know about Your Lease
3. Language Translation Aid
4. Community Resource Sheet
5. Eviction Prevention Policy Template

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Housing Provider:

- Create new, revise and/or maintain eviction prevention practices
- Report eviction prevention practices to the Service Manager
- Approve a Board Resolution ensuring eviction prevention best practices are adopted.

Housing Administration Officer:

- Ensure each Housing Provider has received the *Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit*;
- Annually report to the Manager of Social Housing as to whether each Housing Provider has adopted Eviction Prevention Best Practices;
- Monitor each Housing Provider Board Minutes to verify the

<b>Housing Services Policy</b>	 <b>Hamilton</b>	Content Updated: 2014-11-11
<b>Social Housing Administration</b>		<b>Housing Services Division</b>
<b>Eviction Prevention</b>		Co-ordinated Access Guide
Page 3 of 3		Approval: 2014-11-11
	<p>resolution/approval to adopt new or confirm existing eviction prevention best practices; obtain a copy of the Board Minutes wherein the best practices have been recorded</p> <p>Senior Policy Analyst:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the <i>Toolkit</i> contents up-to-date; make necessary revisions;</li> <li>• Post information to City of Hamilton website;</li> <li>• Create, distribute, collect and analyze a survey for Housing Providers and other stakeholders in Summer 2015 to evaluate eviction prevention efforts</li> </ul> <p><a href="#"><u>Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit</u></a></p>	
<b>COMPLIANCE</b>	<p>There is no legislated requirement under the HSA for Service Managers or Housing Providers to implement Eviction Prevention policies and procedures; however, the City of Hamilton, acting as Service Manager, strongly encourages all non-profit housing providers to adopt an eviction prevention policy and engage in eviction prevention activities.</p> <p>Housing Administration Officers monitor the number of evictions through RGI monthly reports and confirm new or existing eviction prevention best practices through annual operational reviews with Housing Providers.</p> <p>The Manager of Social Housing is responsible for encouraging compliance with this policy.</p>	
<b>HISTORY</b>	<p>The Eviction Prevention Best Practices Toolkit was developed in consultation with representatives from non-profit housing providers, tenant advocates, the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic as well as a City of Hamilton staff.</p> <p>The <i>Toolkit</i> was released on March 4, 2014.</p>	
<b>Approval</b>	<p>Author Name: Tammy Morasse, Senior Policy Analyst  Manager Name: Bob McKnight, Manager of Social Housing  Director Name: Gillian Hendry, Director of Housing Services  Date: 2014-11-11</p>	